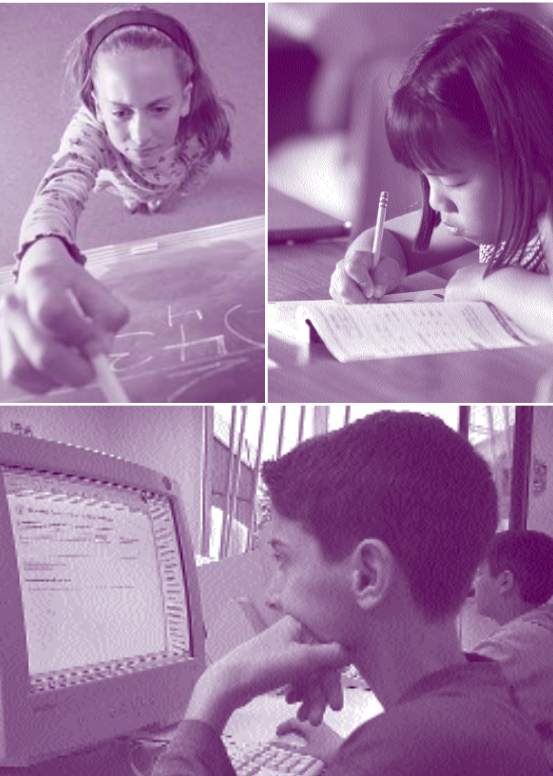


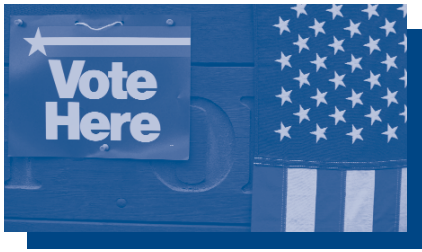
State Representative **Mae Dickinson**



Session Report



- ☒ Voter ID Legislation
- ☒ Education Legislation
- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Fighting Crime



Voter ID Proposal a Flawed Reform Approach

You might have heard that the General Assembly passed a partisan plan to require individuals to show photo identification in order to vote on Election Day. Upon first glance, this sounds like a good idea. Present your driver's license and you can vote. Who couldn't meet that requirement?

People who live at nursing homes and no longer drive, for one. Women who have married and changed their names, because their driver's licenses will not match their voter registration files. Minorities who have had to face many barriers in the past to their efforts to vote. In addition, some people see this as an unnecessary invasion of privacy rights.

The idea has been sold as a way to eliminate fraud and restore honesty to the electoral process. What advocates for the bill have failed to tell you is that this bill will surely deny some Hoosiers the right to vote. Individuals without photo IDs will be required to obtain an ID. This requires fees including obtaining a birth certificate if a voter does not have one.

The cases of electoral fraud in Indiana have all involved absentee ballots, and this legislation fails to address that issue. As the majority party advanced this proposal, it

did not provide a single instance where electoral fraud in Indiana has occurred at a polling site. The main problem in Indiana is not fraud, it is lack of voter participation.

This legislation has several major flaws, and a court challenge already has been launched to determine if it violates basic principles of the Indiana Constitution. Several organizations, including the AARP and the League of Women Voters, objected to the legislation in its final form.

The vast majority of voters have photo IDs and have no problem showing them. Those who do not have photo ID when they are at the polls would be allowed to vote by provisional ballots. But there are problems with this procedure. In the past, as many as half of the provisional ballots were not counted due to processing errors.



Rep. Dickinson debates the voter ID legislation with Rep. Timothy Brown (R-Crawfordsville).

Education Issues Update

A number of important education bills were approved this session, but I think the most important measure affecting our children was the state budget. As I discuss in greater detail elsewhere in this newsletter, the new budget will shortchange many schools and force them to eliminate programs and lay off teachers, factors that will hurt our children's ability to get a quality education.

Here are other major education measures passed in 2005:

Starting in the 2010-11 school year, **students will have to complete the Core 40 curriculum in order to graduate.** Core 40 requires students to receive credits in a series of advanced courses, including English and language arts, math, science, social studies and foreign languages. While increasing standards is laud-

able, the state budget is cutting education funding for additional resources.

Other education bills will **change the enrollment date for kindergarten to August 1 from July 1,** require schools to adopt rules to

prohibit bullying, and provide daily opportunities for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence.

Several proposals were defeated, including plans to move the ISTEP-plus test to the spring and revive the school voucher program.

Starting in 2010, Indiana students will have to complete the Core 40



INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



**School Funding Cuts and
Increased Property Taxes**

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

"I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget."

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing

class sizes. Any additional funding for schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by 5 percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.



Fighting Crime

It will be illegal to run an Internet Web site that is engaged in unlawful or professional gambling. Open containers of alcohol will be prohibited in cars, with violators fined up to \$500.



Inspector General

Fraud and corruption in state government will be investigated by an inspector general created through a new state law approved in 2005. Thanks to changes championed by House Democrats, this inspector will work with locally-elected prosecutors and judges to look into charges of wrongdoing and determine whether to proceed with criminal charges.

Tracking Sex Offenders

A person convicted of possessing child pornography who has a prior conviction for that offense will be required to register as a sex offender. The state will be allowed to seek life in prison without parole for a person who has multiple felony offenses involving sex crimes against a child.



Blood Typing

You will be able to request that your blood type be placed on your driver's license, driver's permit or other identification card.

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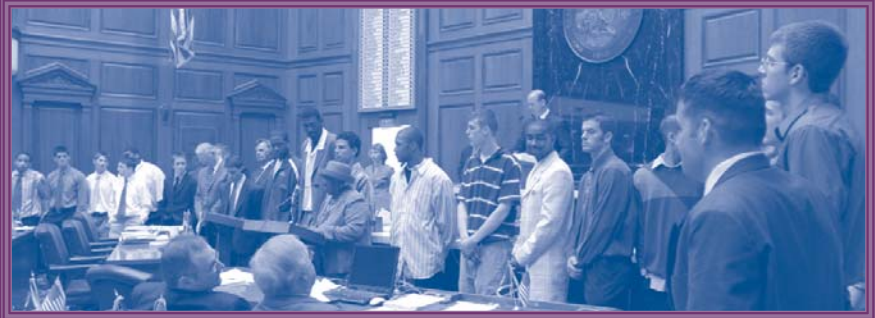
2005 Session Highlights



Listening from her desk,
Rep. Dickinson hears pro-
posed legislation.



Rep. Dickinson addresses
the members of the House
of Representatives.



Rep. Dickinson honors the Lawrence North Basketball team in
the chamber of the House of Representatives.

Representative Mae Dickinson

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